

Most Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why do I have to renew my license over the Internet?**

Internet renewal is strongly encouraged because it reduces the Board's costs and, thus, the fees the Board must charge, and is more efficient for most CPAs. If you do not have a computer or for another reason cannot renew online, you may contact the Board office for the required renewal affirmation documents, complete them and return them to the Board office along with the check made payable to the Treasurer of Virginia for the \$24 renewal fee plus the non-interactive fee of \$5.

- **Why do I have to pay more to mail in a check for my renewal?**

Paper renewals require work by BOA staff that is not required for online renewal. The \$5 non-interactive fee covers the manual processing.

- **I paid my renewal online and entered all of the required information but my name is not listed on the online regulant verification list. What should I do?**

You should contact the Board office immediately, either by email, telephone or in writing. The Board has an internal and an external database of all regulants. Infrequently, the two databases fail to communicate and consolidate information. It is easily corrected as soon as the Board office is notified.

- **I have tried several times to renew my license online. I have not gotten the receipt that I can print but I am getting a message that I am not eligible to renew at this time. What do I need to do?**

Sometimes due to the browser being used, the renewal is processed but the receipt will not appear. When you try to renew again, because the renewal has been processed, you will receive a message that you are not eligible because your license has already been renewed. You need only to go to the "Verify Individual License" and check your online record. Your new expiration date will appear there and you can print your updated information.

- **10-4-99 is the date shown as my initial license date on the regulant verification list on the Board's website. I received my CPA certificate prior to that date. What is the problem?**

On October 4, 1999, the Board's regulations changed and Virginia became a one-tier state. From that date on, all current certificate of maintenance holders were converted to licensees. 10-4-99 was considered to be the initial date of licensure for those individuals.

- **How many hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) do I need?**

Some CPAs are required to complete 120 hours on a 3 year rolling cycle including a minimum of 20 hours each year, while others must complete 45 hours on a 3year rolling cycle including a minimum of 10 hours each year, and there are CPAs who are not required to complete any CPE until they decide to use their CPA designation and practice in an accounting field.

Generally, CPAs who are practicing public accounting or those who are using their CPA designation and providing services to the public must meet the 120-hour requirement. CPAs who are working in the accounting field but who do not provide services to the public must meet the 45-hour requirement. CPAs who do not work in an accounting field are not required to complete CPE each year but there is a requirement that CPE must be completed before these CPAs can begin using their CPA designation and work in an accounting field whether that work is performed for the public or not.

- **When does my CPE reporting cycle begin?**

If you were initially licensed in 2002, your first CPE reporting cycle will be the three calendar years 2003, 2004 and 2005. For CPAs who are practicing public accounting or who are using their CPA designation and providing services to the public, the CPE reporting cycle is the three calendar years immediately preceding the date of renewal, i.e., if you must renew by July 31, 2003, your reporting cycle would be the three calendar years immediately preceding 2003 or 2000, 2001 and 2002. For CPAs who are using the CPA designation but who are not providing services to the public, your CPE requirement became effective July 1, 2002 and your first reporting cycle will be 2003, 2004 and 2005. For this group, any CPE taken between July 1, 2002 and December 31, 2002 may be counted toward the 10 hours required in 2003.

- **When and how do I turn in my CPE credits to the Board?**

Quick answer is, you don't. You must maintain copies of the certificates that you are presented at the completion of the courses that you take. The Board conducts a randomly selected audit each month in which individual CPAs are sent a letter requesting a report of CPE for the full three-year reporting cycle. Copies of the certificates must be forwarded to the Board office at that time.

- **How long do I need to retain proof of completion of CPE?**

You must retain the completion certificates so that you can provide to the Board copies for the three years immediately preceding the year that you are audited. A couple of examples would be, as follows:

Example 1: You receive an audit letter from the Board on February 14, 2004. You must provide copies of the CPE completion certificates for the years of 2003, 2002 and 2001. At the time that you are advised that you are in compliance, you may discard the completion certificates for the year of 2001.

Example 2: You receive an audit letter from the Board on July 22, 2005. You must provide copies of the CPE completion certificates for the years of 2004, 2003 and 2002.

Example 3: You have been retaining your CPE completion certificates since 1998 and you have not received an audit letter from the Board. Your license will expire on November 30, 2003. You must affirm that you have met all CPE requirements at the time of renewal in November 2003 for the three years immediately preceding 2003. You must have retained copies of the CPE completion certificates for 2002, 2001 and 2000 at the time that you renew in November 2003. After you have made your affirmation, you may discard the CPE completion certificates for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000. You will need to retain CPE completion certificates for the years of 2002 and 2001 along with those for 2003, so that you are prepared to affirm that you are in compliance when you renew in 2004.

- **If my employer maintains the official record of my In-house CPE and I am audited by the Board, may I provide that report to the Board rather than copies of the certificates?**

The Board has indicated that the employer's report on CPE for the CPE provided in-house is acceptable if it contains all of the required information including the name of the course provider, title and description of course, date(s) of the program and number of CPE credits awarded.

- **I am a CPE provider and I need to get the Board's approval to conduct my training classes in Virginia. How do I do this?**

The Board no longer requires CPE providers (Sponsors) to obtain Board approval to conduct CPE classes in Virginia. Sponsors may choose to contact the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy to receive the guidelines for designing CPE classes or to register as a NASBA approved CPE sponsor but the Board does not require this. Except for the Ethics CPE requirement, which will become effective in late 2003 (check the Board's website for details and the effective date), CPAs licensed in Virginia determine the CPE courses they will take. They must receive a certificate that clearly shows the name of the course provider, title and description of course, date(s) of the program and number of CPE credits awarded. NOTE: The fact that the Board does not require Sponsors to register does not appear in the Board's regulations. Standards for establishing a CPE training course may be found on the NASBA and AICPA websites, (see links on the BOA website) and there is no requirement to register as a sponsor with either organization.

- **I have had my education credentials reviewed by a credentials evaluation service that is not on Virginia's list of approved providers. Will Virginia accept this review because I will have to pay an additional fee to have the review completed by another service provider?**

The Virginia Board of Accountancy reviews the program of each credential evaluation service prior to that service being added to the list of approved service providers. Therefore, the Board can accept only those evaluations completed by one of the service providers approved by the Board. The list of services is on the Board's website.

- **How can I get a license if I am licensed in another state?**

If you are currently licensed in another state or licensing jurisdiction, you may complete an application by endorsement which can be printed from the Board's website, filled-out and mailed to the Board office. If all required documents accompany the application, the process is a rapid one, usually within 5-7 days.

You may wish to check the "substantially equivalent states" list on the website to determine if your state of current licensure is on the list—there are several shortcuts for applicants from substantially equivalent states.

- **I am a licensed CPA and I provide services to the public as a sole proprietorship. I am the only person in my company. Do I have to be licensed as a CPA firm? Isn't my CPA license enough?**

Yes, the Board must license all CPA firms, including sole proprietorships. Individual CPAs must also keep their individual licenses current. If you are an employee of a CPA firm and are not an owner in the firm, you do not need a CPA firm permit.

- **When does my CPA license expire?**

CPA licenses are set up on a staggered system with a certain portion expiring each month of the year. You must renew your license once a year. If you fail to renew within 30 days following the expiration date, you must pay the renewal fee of \$24, plus a late renewal fee of \$25. If you fail to renew within 12 months following the expiration date, if you were legally required to have a license during the expired period, you must complete a reinstatement application and pay the reinstatement fee of \$250, plus the late renewal fee of \$25, plus the renewal fee for all renewal periods skipped. The CPAs who were not legally required to have a current license during the period that the license was expired must complete a reinstatement application and pay the reinstatement fee of \$250. The Board sends you a renewal notice 60 days prior to the expiration date of your license and a final renewal notice 5 days prior to the expiration date. The Board has heard many stories about license renewal—the dog ate it, my assistant was supposed to pay it, my Ex did not forward it to me, I thought it was a piece of junk mail, I don't read my emails every day, I sent my change of address to the Board office, and I am sorry, I just forgot. Remember, it is your responsibility to renew your license on time even though you do not receive the renewal notice. The Board has proposed in its Emergency Regulations, the following fees for reinstatement of the individual license and CPA firm permit:

An individual CPA license or CPA firm permit was required during the period the license or permit was expired:

Up to 1 year:	\$500
2 to 5 years:	\$1500
Over 5 years:	\$3000

An individual CPA license or CPA firm permit was not required during the period the license or permit was expired: \$250

The Board has proposed in its Emergency Regulations, new CPE requirements for any individual who is seeking reinstatement of his CPA license.

The amended regulation may become effective later in 2003. You should check the BOA website for further details.

- **I know that the Board does not issue the license cards any longer. How can I get an official verification of license status?**

You may request an official verification of your license status and it will be sent to you by email, regular mail or by fax at no charge. Remember, you can check your status on the Board's website at any time by clicking on "Verify Individual or Firm Status." You can print your own status record.

- **Can I call the Board office to find out about the requirements to take the National CPA exam?**

For the quickest response and it is toll-free, call the CPA Exam Service at 1-800-272-3926.

- **When does the Computerized National CPA Exam start? Will I be able to take a paper exam rather than a computerized exam?**

The Computerized National CPA Exam is scheduled to start in April 2004. The last paper and pencil exam will be conducted in November 2003. There will be an opportunity for those who have been granted conditional credit on the paper and pencil exam to transition to the computerized exam. You can learn more about the various provisions for the computerized exam that have been proposed by the Board as Emergency Regulations by visiting the Board's website.

- **When will I be required to have 150 semester hours of education to take the National CPA Exam for Virginia?**

The 150-hour requirement becomes effective on July 1, 2006. All initial candidates who are approved to sit for the National CPA Exam given on or after July 1, 2006 must meet the 150-hour requirement. The Board has proposed as Emergency Regulations that if a candidate is approved to take the exam under the current education requirement and has taken at least one part of the exam, he may continue taking the exam but must pass all parts by December 31, 2007. If he does not pass all parts, he must re-qualify under the 150-hour requirement.

- **I want to form a corporation in Virginia. Can the Board office tell me how to do this?**

You should talk with your attorney about forming a corporation. The Board office will advise you that there are Board requirements regarding ownership of your corporation but the Board does not have statutory authority or legal staff to provide legal advice to you about your corporation. You must register your corporation with the State Corporation Commission (see link on the BOA website). You may need a local business permit to operate in a particular locality. And, if you are forming a corporation to provide public accounting services, or if you use CPA in your business name, you must register as a CPA firm with the Board. The Board has proposed in its Emergency Regulations that any firm providing CPA services to the public must register with the Board. The amended regulation may become effective later in 2003. You should check the BOA website for further details. (Reminder: Sole proprietorships must register their businesses with the Board even though the sole proprietor is the only person in the business providing services and even though he holds an individual CPA license to practice.)

- **How do I know if my firm is required to have a peer review?**

If you own your business or you are part owner in the business, you will have to affirm at the time of the firm renewal that you have met all requirements for peer review. There are only a few licensed firms that do not have to undergo peer review. Your firm may be required to undergo a System review OR Engagement review OR a Report review. You may learn more about the three types of review and what your firm must do by reading Regulation 18 VAC 5-21-70, entitled Peer Review.

- **How long do I have to retain client records?**

You must retain all client working papers that are necessary to support work performed for the longer of (i) seven years after the service is completed; or (ii) three years after any regulatory proceeding or litigation, civil or criminal, is final and not subject to appeal. The Board has proposed a change to this requirement that will require retention of client working papers for audit, review and compilation engagements, only. It is anticipated that this change may become effective later in 2003. You may check the BOA website for the status of the change.

- **I am a dues paying member so what does the Board do for me?**

If you believe that you are a dues paying member of the Virginia Board of Accountancy (Board), you may be confusing this with your membership in the Virginia Society of Certified Public Accountants. The Board was created by the Virginia General Assembly in Virginia in 1910. The Board is required by law to establish the entry, examination and education requirements for those who want to practice as Certified Public Accountants (CPA) in Virginia. In determining the appropriate standards of practice for CPAs and CPA firms, the Board must consider carefully what is essential to protect the consumers of services provided by CPAs and CPA firms. You pay fees to the Board, as required by law, to cover the costs to operate the Board. These fees are called renewal fees not membership fees.

- **How can I find out more about the activities of the Board?**

Licensees and members of the public who want more information about the Board's activities may request to be added to the Board's Public Participation List. Individuals and businesses on the list receive regular mailings on scheduled Board meetings involving regulatory review. All proposed changes to the regulations must be posted on the Board's website. The names of the Board members are posted on the website as well as the meeting dates. If you are unable to find the answer to your question on the website, you may contact the Board office by email, regular mail, or fax. The Board staff will make every effort to assist you immediately.

- **Who can I speak with if I am unable to obtain the information or services that I need?**

The Board staff is well-trained and customer service oriented. However, if you feel that you need to speak to someone "in charge," you should ask for the Executive Director or you may choose to write to the Chairman of the Board. The names of those individuals are listed on the Board's website.